



# SOBERING CENTER

SERVING AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY

#TheSoberingCenter

#BeSafeBeSoberATX

# Mission of the Austin/Travis County Sobering Center

The Sobering Center enhances public health and safety by providing a safe place for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up as an alternative to the emergency room or jail and, where appropriate, to provide a bridge to recovery.



## Numbers Served

The Sobering Center has performed over 8,000 intakes since its inception.

# Sobering Center of Austin

- No jail or emergency room
- No citations, fines, or medical bills
- No cost for Sobering Center services
- Open 24 hours/7 days a week
- Complete confidentiality
  - We do not notify anyone of a client's admission into the center without consent or subpoena
- Connection to community resources and other services
- Assistance with coordinating transportation home



# Admission Criteria



- 18 years or older
- Suspected alcohol or drug intoxication
- No evidence of acute head injury
- No untreated lacerations
- No seizure within the last 24 hours
- No acute gastrointestinal bleeding
- Suicidal/homicidal ideation cleared by a MH professional

# SBERING CENTER

Client is referred/  
transported to  
the Sobering  
Center by Law  
Enforcement,  
EMS or other  
referral partner

NO P.I. CITATION  
NO FINES

Intake Medics  
do a screening  
to ensure it's  
safe for the  
client to sober  
up in our facility

Recovery  
Support  
Specialists  
monitor the  
client and  
continue to  
assess their  
needs

SBIRT  
Counselors  
conduct an  
assessment  
used to link a  
client to the  
appropriate  
community  
resources

# How it Started

- Founded in 2018 through City/County ILA
- Building from County, Operating funds from City
- ILA expires September 2023



# How it's Going

- Law Enforcement and EMS no longer the only paths to the Sobering Center
- Patients are now able to 'hold over' for services
- Puddy in the cracks of a broken system





# Outcomes

- Total intakes – 2,032
- Total admitted – 1,884 (93%)
- Number of post-admit transfers made by
  - EMS – 118
  - PD – 33
- Total diversions from ER & jail – 1,789 (88%)
- Successful discharges\* – 966 (51% of those admitted)



# Outcomes

- 144 seeking treatment (holdovers)
- 96% warm handoff
- 80 holds for referral partners
- 80% return to original care



# Cost/Benefit Analysis

Findings

Using data from FY22

(October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

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# Costs

	Total	Per Diversion
Direct Costs, SC	\$ 1,503,581	\$ 840.46
Direct Costs, County	\$ 180,000	\$ 186.34
Direct Costs, EMS	\$ 15,915	\$ 8.89
Direct Costs, APD	\$ 6,861	\$ 3.84
Indirect Costs, EMS	\$ 92,106	\$ 51.48
Total Costs	\$ 1,798,464	\$ 1,091.01

- Direct Costs, SC – costs borne by the Sobering Center to deliver its services
- Direct Costs, County – foregone rent on SC facility
- Direct Costs, EMS - medical supplies donated by EMS, EMS costs to transport clients to ER/hospital (non-admits and admit-transfers)
- Direct Costs, APD – APD costs to transport clients to jail (non-admits and admit-transfers)
- Indirect Costs, EMS – foregone reimbursement for patients transported to the SC rather than to an ER/hospital.
- Note: CBA includes only direct program costs. Full budget for SC is \$2,279,750

# Benefits: Immediate & Future Diversions

	Number	Total	Per Diversion
ER Diversions	907	\$ 1,333,290	
Jail Diversions	882	\$ 229,408	
Reduction in future ER utilization	649	\$ 953,783	
Total Benefits		\$ 2,381,162	\$ 1,406.64

FY22 BENEFITS NET COSTS \$718,018

BENEFIT / COST RATIO 1.4

# Cost/Benefit Accrual: By Party

Party	Costs	Benefits
Sobering Center	84 %	
Travis County	10 %	3.5%
Austin EMS	6 %	
Police Departments / APD	0.4 %	5.6%
Hospitals		90.9%

# Other Benefits Not Included

- Individual benefits of not going to jail or hospital (costs, relationships, record)
- Long-term benefits to the system and individuals related to the organization's role in connecting people to needed treatment
  - Health care savings
  - Reduced crime
  - Improved health / reduced mortality

# National Recognition

- IACP Toolkit and Case Study
- National Sobering Collaborative
- Model for Excellence

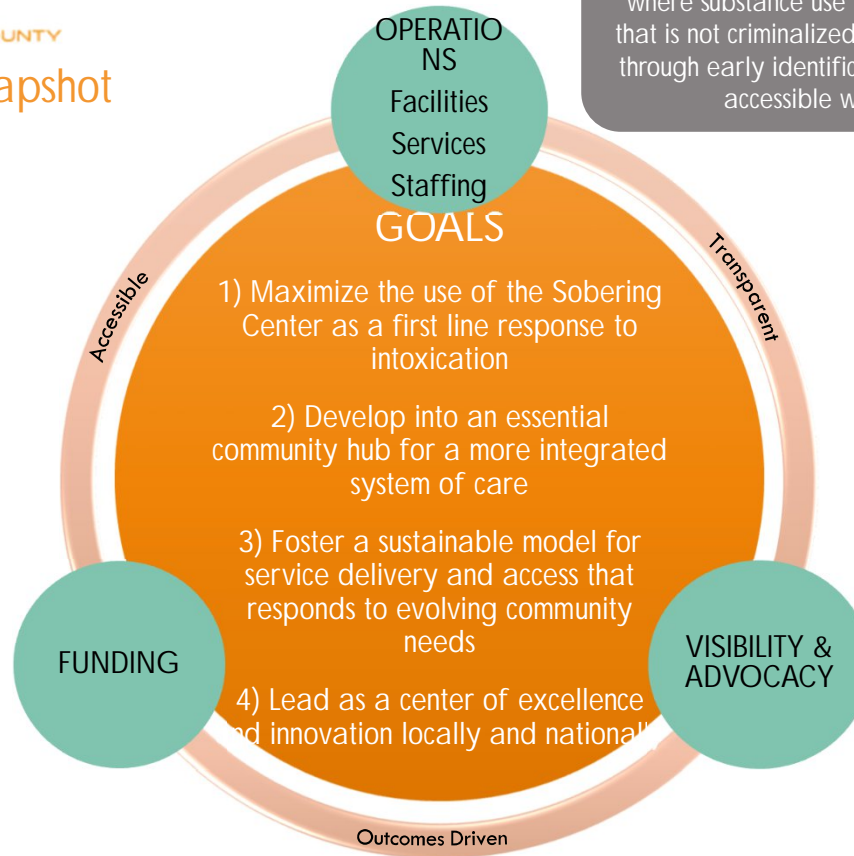




## Strategic Plan Snapshot 2023-2027

### VALUES

Compassion  
Harm Reduction  
Advocacy  
Integrity  
Respect



### VISION

We envision a safe and responsible community where substance use is a public health issue that is not criminalized, recovery is supported through early identification, and treatment is accessible when possible.

### MISSION

We enhance public health and safety by providing a safe place for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up as an alternative to the emergency room or jail and, where appropriate, to provide a bridge to recovery.

# Where we are Headed

- Immediate Next Steps: Bridge Meds
- MH Diversion Partnership/Continuum
- 5 year Strategic Plan

# Gratitude and Needs

- Kathie Tovo
- Jose "Chito" Vela
- APH Staff
- Renew ILA
- APH Budget Negotiations



Questions?

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